

Aruba TODAY

On Top Of The News

Email: news@arubatoday.comwebsite: www.arubatoday.com

Monday, December 7, 2009

Daughter of founder of Aruba's first English newspaper

Condolences for the family of colleague Sonia Wever

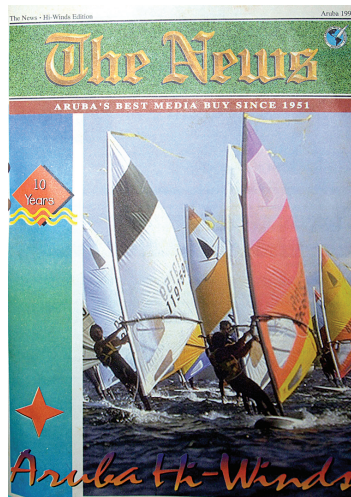


ORANJESTAD – On Friday, December 4th, 2009, the owner of “The News” newspaper Sonia Weaver-Schouten passed away in Dr. Horacio Oduber Hospital. Schouten condition continued to deteriorate after troubles with the paper. The court declared the English-language newspaper on November 16 bankruptcy. Much of the capital and revenue were spent on expensive medical treatments that Schouten had undergone.

The popular paper was founded in 1951 by Gerardus Schouten and his wife, Bernadette Schouten-Blanchard, and during its fifty-eight years of publication, set many benchmarks for journalism and newspapers on Aruba. Gerard Schouten came to Aruba with his wife to

work at the Lago Refinery, and during a period when the workers were striking, began printing a newsletter keeping people current on events. The Lago Colony had for years published a small internal paper called The Esso Times, but THE NEWS is considered to be Aruba's first English newspaper for general consumption. He opened Oranjestad Printing downtown, which later became Pro Graphics, and was finally located adjacent to THE NEWS office on Italiestraat, on the western outskirts of Oranjestad.

In March of 1983, Gerald Schouten became “Sir Gerry” upon receiving the title of Ridder in the Order of Oranje-Nassau; a Knight of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. He also served as a much



respected president of the Inter-American Press Association, IAPA; THE NEWS was the first Aruban paper to be a registered member of a prestigious international press organization.

During its existence, THE NEWS instigated a number of innovations, including the first newspaper on the island printed in color. Sir Gerry's daughter, Sonia Wever-Schouten became Managing Director and established the first and for a number of years, the only Sunday newspaper on Aruba. Many of Aruba's repeat island visitors, such as Jim Curran, felt that a part of his ritual of relaxation upon arriving was to pick up his welcoming copy of the Sunday edition of THE NEWS, where he would catch up on local events while enjoy a sunrise on the beach.

THE NEWS was well known for their special editions dedicated to holidays and



Sonia Wever-Schouten, Wilbert Wever and their daughter Margaret, Editor in Chief

landmark occasions, such as the visit of Prince Albert of Monaco to open the Divi Links, and for fifty-eight years was a recognized source of quality, reliable coverage of local news. The global financial situation and the increasing popularity of the Internet as a news source has proven detrimental to many newspapers in the U.S. and around the world; combined with mitigating circumstance

these factors have also contributed to the sad demise of THE NEWS.

One dedicated reader, who always made it a point to pick up her paper every evening at one of the resorts or the local markets, commented “Well, no NEWS is BAD news,” upon hearing the paper had permanently closed its doors. Condolences to the family of Mrs. Sonia Wever from Aruba Today and Bon Dia Aruba. □



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PALM BEACH Friends and regulars of Café Rembrandt's owners Stef, Stefan and Patrick showed up in droves last Friday evening, when the popular hang-out celebrated its first anniversary in true Rembrandtstyle: exuberant. The master himself would



have felt right at home. Rembrandt! ☐ Masha pabien to Café



Aloewood Gardens, a tropical home away from home



NOORD -- The recently opened Aloewood Gardens is located in Montanja, Noord, just five minutes from Aruba's sugar-white sandy beaches, high-rise hotels, colorful shopping malls, and Tierra del Sol's world-class golf-course. Aloewood Gardens offers spacious, comfortable lodging



for vacationing families, business travelers, and guests from around the world, in a private residential compound on a quiet street consisting of two comfortably apportioned townhouses plus a fully furnished detached house.

The accommodations are spacious, completely furnished in a contemporary European aesthetic, and include all necessities like tableware, a fully equipped modern kitchen with all cookware, all linens, and towels. With the built in dishwasher, private laundry room, and air conditioning guests can enjoy all the comforts of home, away from home.

And what better way to end a long day of exploring the island than by savoring a refreshing beverage under the open-air gazebo while the kids splash in the private pool? The private compound is a mere 10 minutes away from the Reina Beatrix International Airport and five minutes from the center of Aruba's capital Oranjestad.

Even though Aruba is a very safe vacation destination, for extra peace of mind Aloewood Gardens has installed a state of the art security system, surveillance cameras, remote control operated entry gate, and private parking. Aloewood Gardens' house and townhomes are available separately (for small groups) or together, for short, medium



or long term stays, and are especially designed with the comfort and safety of traveling families in mind, creating your tropical home away from home. □



Appetizer

- Fish Soup
- Onion Soup
- Conch Fritters
- Escargot
- Salad

Entrée

- **Fresh Catch of the Day** prepared by our local chef just the way you like it.
- **Jumbo Shrimp** from our local waters, breaded served with potato or rice or with garlic tossed over linguine.
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Dessert

- Chocolate or Banana Cake
- Ice Cream
- Coffee / Tea

* This special cannot be used with any other promotions, vouchers or certificates.

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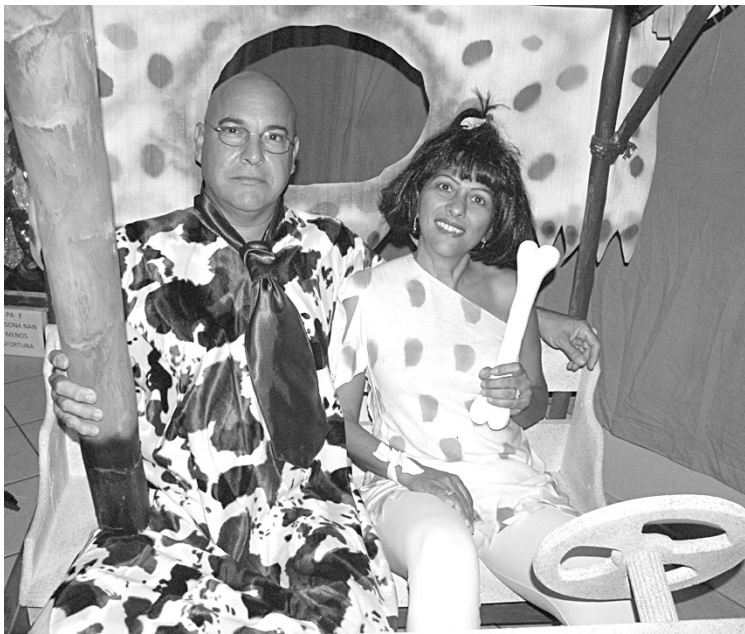
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Children's Meetings Will Be Held Each Night As Well

The Flintstones come to La Cabana



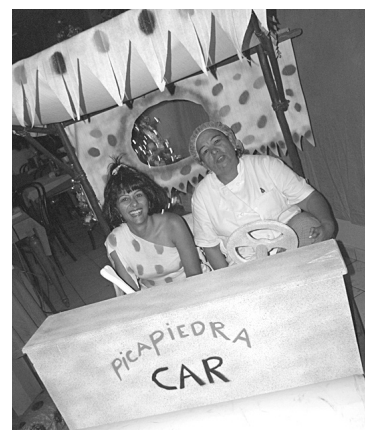
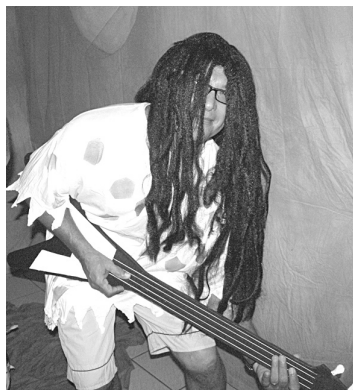
EAGLE BEACH – Fred Flintstone, his wife Wilma and their neighbor Barney Rubble transformed the associate cafeteria at La Cabana Beach & Racquet Club into Bedrock, in the Stone Age. Best friends and family members, cavemen Tex, Eddy, Zeke and Ed, joined Dino the barking baby dinosaur over lunch to entertain associates on their break. The Flintstones drove a car made of stone & wood, and played music on the record player made of rock; they used a primitive version of the modern phone and cuckoo-clock, and dressed in animal skins, carrying clubs and bones.

All props and costumes were designed by the Yabba-Dabba-Doo Engineering team of the resort – made of recycled and painted wall paper, wood scraps and paint left-overs. It was a wow performance that rocked the resort.

And the Flintstones Band, against the backdrop of the



Flintstones movie, was fun. The monthly themed lunches at La Cabana Beach & Racquet Club are famous,



as each department strives to outdo and outshine the team of the previous month. Congratulation on a fantastic job, Engineers, you brought Bedrock to life!!



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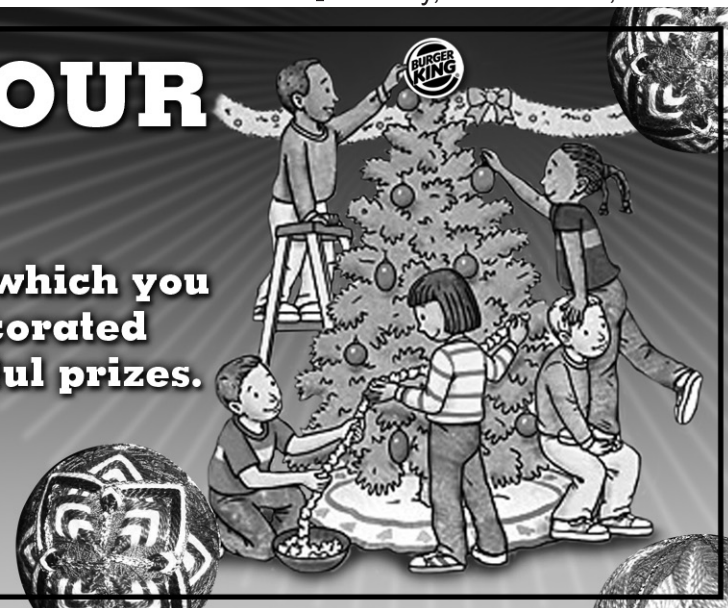
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HAVE IT YOUR WAY!

Last day to bring your X-mas ball or star is on January 8, 2010



After the indefinite shutdown of its plant in Aruba Valero employee killed in boiler explosion

By Brett Clanton

HOUSTON — A day after a deadly accident at Valero's Texas City refinery, officials with the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration arrived at the plant Saturday to begin an investigation into what went wrong.

Tommy Mannis, 40, an instrument and electrical operator from Alvin, was killed in an explosion around 9 p.m. Friday as a work crew was attempting to restart a boiler that had tripped offline earlier in the day. Another Valero employee and a contract worker suffered minor injuries.

Investigations being conducted by San Antonio-based Valero and OSHA will try to pinpoint why the boiler failed.

"We know it was very cold yesterday, but it wasn't necessarily related to the weather," Valero spokesman Bill Day said at a news conference at the plant Saturday. Mannis had worked at the refinery since March 2007.

The 245,000-barrel-per-day refinery, Valero's third largest, didn't shut down, and it continued to run at planned rates Saturday. The damaged boiler had provided steam to refining units, but the plant was able to run with other boilers on the site.

Still, the accident cast a somber pall over the sprawling plant as workers went about their jobs.

"Something like this affects all of us," Day said, noting that grief counselors had

been made available to plant workers.

Valero, the nation's largest oil refiner, has struggled in recent months amid a downturn in demand for gasoline, diesel and other petroleum-based fuels. Other major refiners have also felt the pinch.

Valero recently said it would permanently close its refinery in Delaware City, Del. It has also indefinitely idled a plant in Aruba and reduced production at other sites.

In Texas City, the company has tried to improve efficiency and install units that are less costly to operate, Day said, but it has not cut any of the plant's roughly 500 employees and has kept safety a top priority, he said.

Friday's accident marks the second time a worker has been killed at the 101-year-old plant since Valero bought it from Basis Petroleum in 1997. Day said fatalities have been "very rare" across the company.

Valero officials said they notified governmental and regulatory agencies, including the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board, of the incident.

Officials with OSHA did not return calls Saturday seeking comment.

'Challenging year'

Daniel Horowitz, spokesman for the Chemical Safety Board, an independent federal agency charged with investigating chemical and refinery accidents, said his agency has not decided whether it will open a formal investigation.

In part, that's because the agency is stretched thin with eight other open investigations of incidents at U.S. refineries, not all of them fatal, he said. "It's been a very challenging year for refinery safety," he said.

The Valero accident shines a light on the need for greater training for operators that work with boilers, said Charlie Singletary, business manager with the International Union of Operating Engineers, Local 564, which represents workers in area petrochemical plants but not the Valero refinery.

"Boilers are not taken seriously in the state of Texas," he said, noting that no state license is required for technicians, as it is in some other states.

Valero workers have been extensively trained for their jobs, Day said. But the company plans to discuss safety with employees in the wake of the accident. □

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*** Human Hints Daily ***

Stay On Your Path

As Humans, We are continually subject to forces that distort us for their own benefit. Every moment of every day, we must remain vigilant that our decisions and actions keep us on the path we want to be on. In order to stay on our own track, we must always be aware of where we are, where we want to go, and where our decisions and actions might take us. We must constantly evaluate our present position in life. Do you have clear goals in mind and a plan to reach them? Does each day bring you closer to the life of your dreams? What are your present priorities, and how do you fulfill them? Are you connecting and contributing to the Whole? Do you feel valuable? What seems to be blocking you from making your life the way you want it? Become aware of your obstacles and release them by forgiving yourself. Guilt is the only thing keeping us from our goals, and we have nothing to feel guilty

about.

Whatever we did, we did as an Unconscious Human reacting to three dimensional conditions. Understood. It is also Understood that to hurt others is to hurt yourself, and what you think of others is what you think of yourself.

Play Nice!

We must continually evaluate our goals. How will you measure your success, on your path to where you're going?

Are yesterday's priorities still important to you? You can change your goals, but remember that the more you keep them in the same general direction, the less energy you'll use in changing your direction. Changing direction always uses energy to change the momentum. Be willing to change your goals, but if you go in many different directions, the path to your destination will be less direct. Be dynamic, malleable, focused and committed when it comes to your goals.

Are your daily decisions and actions taking you closer to your dreams? If not, do you have a plan to change your situation in a prudent manner, so you don't become desperate? Desperation rearranges the physical world to make itself stronger within you. The more desperate you are, the more the world will give you reason to be desperate. We cannot know what Time has in store for us, but we can make conscious decisions with the specific intention of meeting our goals. Are you meeting the milestones that will allow your situation to change?

At every moment, we make decisions and take action which leads us either toward or away from our goals. Even when we're vigilant and constantly aware of where we want our lives to go, we all know how easy it is to be distracted away from our chosen direction. We are all familiar with the Beautiful and Terrifying Allure of the Physical!

When you practice living every moment with Conscious Intent, you will become powerful and steadfast in your determination.

Conscious Intent provides

a definite direction for your efforts and a clear focus for your mind.

Being aware of what you want prevents you from being tossed around by life. Conscious intent helps to keep you on your track, and off of someone else's.

With Conscious Intent, we will express our true selves without distortion from external forces. External forces have no power over us when we know what we want. When we stay focused on our goals, we stay on our path, and we don't get lost chasing exotic animals through the jungle.

With focus and determination, you will stay true to your Self.

Quentin has over 20 years experience balancing what we refer to as the Real World, with science and spirit. He has held positions of responsibility and authority, received a Bachelor of Science in Engineering Physics from Colorado School of Mines, and has studied many avenues of alternative thought. Human Hints Daily is the culmination of his knowledge, experience and practice. These free daily emails detail concrete, real-world techniques to consciously create any future you choose, while in the throes of daily life created by outdated modes of thought.

Until Tomorrow...

~Quentin Danziger

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The Promenade Restaurant

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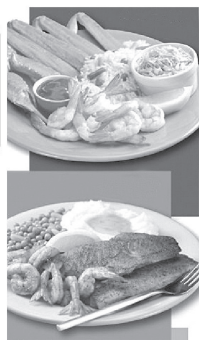
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ALOHA BRIDGE CLUB ARUBA (ABCA)

RESULTS THURSDAY, 3 DECEMBER 2009

ORANJESTAD - A total of 10 pairs attended the morning bridge session at the Members Lounge of the Aruba Beach Club Resort.

Muriel Sam Sin joined the group as a guest player.

The results 50% and higher are as follows:

- 1) Nelly Aal / Gerry Meenhorst 60.42 %
- 2) Gertie Vultink / Jaenette Schoemaker 55.21 %
- 3) Els Lacle / Cornelia Sloterdijk 53.13 %
- 4) Geke In 't Veld / Stascha Hornix 52.08 %

RESULTS FRIDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2009

The evening bridge session at the Frank Conway Room of the Casa del Mar Beach Resort attracted 10 pairs.

Joke and Gerrit van Dulleman, Kees Vader and Jan van der Roest joined the club as guest players.

The results 50% and higher are as follows:

- 1) Maylene and Fred Koopman 68.23 %
- 2) Geke In 't Veld / Kees Vader 61.46 %
- 3) Annemieke de Cuba / Chris Joosten 53.65 %
- 4) Addy Eilers / Jan van der Roest 53.13 %
- 5) Gerry Meenhorst / Annette Ybeles Smit 50.00 %

Aloha Bridge Club Aruba meets twice a week: on Thursday mornings at the Members Lounge of the Aruba Beach Club, starting at 9.00 am and on Friday evenings at the Frank Conway Room of Casa del Mar starting at 7.30 pm. Signing up closes ten minutes before starting time. Fee for guest players: \$ 6.00 or Afl. 10.00 per person.

The club can also be of assistance in finding single players a bridge partner. Please call Addy Eilers : tel. 582-4953

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PALM BEACH – The health and calorie conscious among us need fear steakhouses no more. Whether it's a low-carb, low-fat, or even vegetarian diet you follow, Texas de Brazil Churrascaria fits into just about every dieter's menu plan.

Low carb eaters will have all their expectations surpassed with a tempting carnivorous selection of umpteen cuts of sizzling beef, pork, lamb, sausage, and poultry. The meats are prepared in the healthiest style of cooking—slow roasting—where much of the fat drips off in the roasting process, so those looking for a lower fat option to sautéing, pan frying, or deep frying will also be able to indulge.

The Brazilian-style steakhouse also offers a garden full of healthy eats on a lavish 40-item seasonal salad bar, giving dieters plenty to choose from to accompany the

slow-roasted meats. A selection of fresh lettuces and vegetables may be standard for most salad bars, but Texas de Brazil's version goes a gourmet twist further, treating the palate to additional items like marinated portabella mushrooms, sweet roasted bell peppers, hearts of palm, sundried tomatoes, imported cheeses—including fresh buffalo mozzarella—sushi, home-made soups, and much more.

The salad bar is included in the continuous service meal with unlimited choices from the grilled meats, but for vegetarians or the non-meat eaters, a special price is offered for just the salad bar. Of course, for those looking to splurge while on vacation, Texas de Brazil will gladly serve their garlic mashed potatoes, traditional fried plantains, and their world-famous parmesan cheese bread as part of the meal.

**Restaurant
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Monday - Sat 6 pm - 11
Sunday 5 pm - 11 pm

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PALM BEACH - Fresher than fresh, is the motto of the popular Bugaloe Beach Bar & Grill at De Palm Pier. Caught in the morning, served at night... That's the Bugaloe way!

Chef Marc Hernandez is proudly presenting his rich platter with an 18oz Red Snapper or Grouper, a choice depending on the catch of that day. "Bugaloe is known for fun and craziness, so it was just a logical step for me to go crazy with this colorful pallet

of exquisite fish, yellow rice and rich vegetables," Chef Marc says. With a smile he adds "And that just for US\$ 20!"

And right he is, as the platter has been a hit from the start. Served with a bottle of white wine this fish feast is truly a delight on your Monday night.

Bugaloe is located at
De Palm Pier in
Palm Beach between
RIU Palace and
Radisson Resort.

OPENING HOURS

Bugaloe Beach Bar and Grill is open daily from 9am till midnight. You may go there for a casual lunch or dinner and on Mondays the special is served from 5:30pm till 10:00pm. Reservations are not needed... just follow the good music, the fun and the smiles on the beach and you will know where Bugaloe is.



SALSA WORKSHOP

Always wanted to learn how to dance Salsa? Well, you will get your chance on Wednesday evening. Reggie and Sabine from ArubaSalsa will show you the moves of Latin

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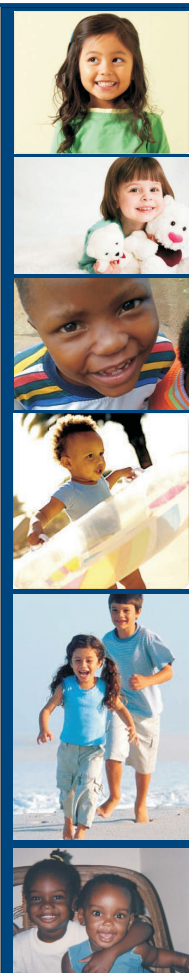
T.H. Palm & Company hosts the



PALM BEACH – Survival was this year's theme for the 6th Annual Girls Night Out as it has been an interesting year and many in the community felt the impact of global economic downturn, which required navigating the business landscape with creativity and foresight. True to the theme, all Salamander

Holdings staffers wore little white nurse-caps, prepared to assist their guests with more chilled champagne or another delicious canapé, catered by Flavors. All shoppers were awarded a Survival Kit upon departure, designed to aid life's smallest emergencies including a nail file, a band aid, needle and thread!

With the help of its loyal pa T.H. Palm & Company was more able to make a differ in the community with Tikkun Olam, repair of the v initiative. A number of local not-for- organizations received help year among them Funda pa Hende Muhe Den Dific



Christmas time in Aruba.
Please donate one NEW GIFT to bring a smile on the face of a child. The objective of "Toys Pa Muchanan" is to help less fortunate children in Aruba to experience the Joy of Christmas.

Donations are accepted from Now till December 15, 2009.

Your NEW Gift can be for a newborn to 16-year-olds (teenagers enjoy gift vouchers), no matter what value. Unwrapped Gifts can be dropped at: DA Drogist, Flora Market, Treasure Box Toy Store, TAO Toys or at

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ARUBA REALTY

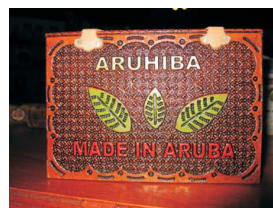


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ORANJESTAD- Benjamin Petrocchi started the newest export product of Aruba, locally produced cigars called "Aruhiba". These cigars are produced and cultivated in Aruba.

Petrocchi has always had an interest in the cigar business and has also sold Premium Cuban Cigars, and now he is growing his own tobacco crop. After many attempts and trips to Santo Domingo and Cuba he started his own production and cultivation of Aruhiba Cigars in Aruba. The process took ten years. Petrocchi dedication to the cigars is important for the molding and process of making a perfect cigar which takes a long time. The cigar box is specially designed for the cigars with the logo "Aruhiba". Petrocchi considers Aruhiba a promotion for Aruba through fine quality cigars. The company sells International cigars as well. Buy a gift box of Aruhiba Corona with five cigars and you will get 1 FREE cigar of \$35. Located at the Historic Dutch Windmill. Open on Sunday from 9am to 8pm. And also at Tamarijn Hotel open from 9am to 1pm. Aruhiba is only available in above mentioned stores. Visit our authentic tobacco farm where cigars are handmade.



BUY & RECEIVE ONE ARUBAN CIGAR FREE WITH THIS FLYER

The 6th Annual Girls Night Out



Imeldahof Children's Home, Koningin Wilhelmina Fonds, Edmund E. Harms Foundation, Telefon Pa Hubentud, and Centro Kibrahacha. As T.H. Palm & Company enters its third year with Tikkun Olam, it wished to thank all shoppers for their generous participation in the cycle of giving. Recently, just in time for the company's 15th anniversary, its flagship store for The Coconut Trading Co. brand

opened at the Palm Beach Village Mall. The Coconut Trading Co. now enjoys two locations one at the Marriott Ocean Club and one at the heart of Palm Beach with abundant parking in the back of the store, open daily from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. With the opening of its flagship store, the company expanded its Tikkun Olam program, joining hands with Fundashon Pa Nos Comunidad. Each time you shop at The Coconut Trading

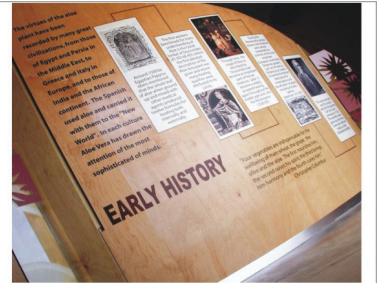
Co. at the Marriott Ocean Club or at the Village Mall, a percentage of the purchase will be donated to Fundashon Pa Nos Comunidad. Pictured here Jodi and The Salamander Holdings Family wishing guests a Healthy and Happy Holiday Season, during T.H. Palm & Company, 6th Annual Girls Night Out. You are welcome to become a fan of the store on Facebook. □



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The French Steakhouse delivers dining under the stars



stars.

The famed French Steakhouse prides itself on the elegant dining experience it offers patrons in the fully air-conditioned dining room. Yet recently the idea of adding a garden spot to the existing blueprint began to sprout in the creative mind of Executive Chef George Hoek, and he immediately recruited the landscapers to create the intimate, lovely setting. The French Steakhouse Ooh-La-La menu is now served indoor and alfresco, featuring creative appetizers, soups, salads, seafood dishes, poultry and the Pièce de Résistance South American & USDA Beef specialties.

Among popular appetizers the chef's Tropical Crab Cakes with pineapple & mango salsa and the Teriyaki Glazed Seared Duck Breast, served with garden greens and balsamic dressing, are real crowd pleasers.

True to the restaurant's French roots, the Onion Soup is a classic, while the Honey Glazed Salmon Salad winks at the exotic East with a sweet soy dressing. The menu features a great variety of seafood dishes from fresh fish to the totally sinful and amazingly-decadent Caribbean Stuffed Shrimp with Crabmeat and Bacon, which became an instant hit. The tequila and sweet chili glaze, lends the Jumbo shrimp a pure taste of heaven!

The French Steakhouse is naturally famous for the South American Churrasco steak, a signature preparation, which now shares the stage with juicy



USDA beef specialties such as NY Sirloin and Filet Mignon.

Light-eaters will find the Jerk Chicken Skewers and the Lemon Herb Broilers very satisfying.

Open seven days a week from 5:30 p.m. - 11:00 p.m. the French Steakhouse is blessed with the nicest staff and a delightfully renovated dining room with sparkling China, crisp linen, an interesting bread basket, colossal desserts and live jazz on piano with Eddy Samson who is Aruba's best entertainer, and a walking & breathing music encyclopedia, just whistle the tune, and Eddy will produce a symphonic version of your favorite song.

Hungry patrons will appreciate the Ambassador's 5-course menu featuring the run of the menu highlights for just \$34.95 per person. www.manchebo.com steakhouse

Eagle Beach – The French Steakhouse at the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa just added another charming dining option, a tropical outdoor courtyard, featuring delicious cuisine under the

Pega Pega Café & Beach Bar reinvents Beach Cuisine



frozen cocktail list, with fresh margaritas, leaves nothing out, fruit or ice cream smoothies, including Yellow Birds, Sex daiquiris, coladas and on the Beach and Mudslides,



Eagle Beach – Pega Pega Café & Beach Bar at the Manchebo Beach Resort & Spa is widely recognized as the home of Beach Cuisine.

Executive Chef George Hoek and his culinary team serve a Sun Splashed menu on the ocean front terrace, raising the restaurant to a must-visit, must-try status.

The contemporary menu, lists many favorite dishes from around the world, borrowing inspiration from US, Mexican, Thai, Jamaican, Cuban, Greek and Mediterranean kitchens, all served with a tropical, Caribbean flair.

From Sun-Sational Salads, to Cuban pressed jawbreakers and wraps, mid-day platters also include oversize Beef Burgers, Philly Cheese Steak Sandwiches and Hot Dogs.

The Pega Pega tropical &

making a lunch-time brain-freeze, extremely easy to get! The Pega Pega, one of Aruba's oldest beach bars is open on fabulous Eagle Beach, with unrivaled views, caring, gracious service, and relaxed atmosphere, from 12 noon to 5 p.m. The bar is open from 11 a.m. to 11 p.m.

Giorgio's Ristorante Italiano introduces Menu Turistico



Eagle Beach -- Giorgio's Ristorante Italiano located at the heart of the low-rise hotels at the Manchebo Beach Resort &

Spa, delivers authentic Mediterranean flavors, at a reasonable price.

The restaurant has just introduced Menu Turistico a three-course dinner featuring appetizers, main courses and desserts for just \$19.95, per person, plus 15% service charge.

Patrons may choose between home made soup and Caesar salad, Fettuccini Alfredo, Lasagna Casarecia, Spaghetti alla Bolognese or any favorite pizza with Tiramisu, Cheese Cake or Ice Cream for the sweet finale.

Executive Chef George Hoek is the resort's much-appreciated culinary expert. He was the recent recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award, presented by the Aruba Hotel & Tourism Association in collaboration with the Digicel Group. Chef George accepted the Shoco Award, the national award of excellence, and Aruba's top professional decoration, in the tourism industry.

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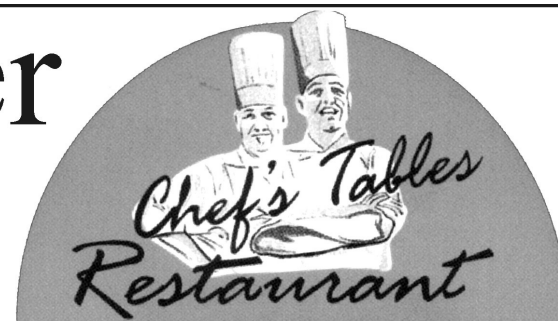
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INDOOR & OPEN AIR

Prison guards walk off job for more pay, better management

POINTE BLANCHE--Prison guards demanding retroactive pay and better management left work Thursday, insisting that Justice Minister Magali Jacoba guarantee changes.

Led by the Curaçao-based ABVO union, guards here and in Curaçao walked off the job to protest what they call an inattentive Central Government that refuses to resolve problems like underpayment and alleged unfairness to prison workers. They refused to back down until the minister guaranteed the pay and promotions on paper.

About 20 St. Maarten guards on the early shift lined the steps outside the Pointe Blanche House of Detention from midday as ABVO shop steward Randall Salome

fielded calls from the union's Curaçao office, management and reporters.

Guards here want money that dates as far back as 2002 and long-awaited promotions. "A lot of workers' functions are being underpaid. They have ... to pay the people their money," Salome said. The guards also want their job descriptions prepared so they have a basis for legal evaluations.

"It's like they want to keep St. Maarten back," Salome said. The union contends that guards are frustrated with workers from abroad being hired and in their minds stealing their jobs. They argue that the management team has failed. "You know when someone comes in to give you support, but don't take

away position," Salome said. "Of course the workers don't feel comfortable listening to those people."

Guards here say they have tried repeatedly to persuade Minister Jacoba to intervene. She could not be reached for comment.

Guards here unanimously decided at 3:41pm to skip work today, Friday, in favour of gathering until the minister is willing to talk with them. Guards here joined the strike in the afternoon after Curaçao guards had been picketing from early morning. "Today is visitor day; so we worked until 12:00pm," Salome explained.

The guards plan to meet at Workers Institute for Organised Labour (WIFOL) headquarters from early today.

"We want to have something to show them," Salome said, underscoring the importance his union placed on written agreements, with stated timeframes, with the minister. Prison administrators and senior personnel carried out the guards' duties Thursday, director Rudsel Ricardo said, expressing dismay. "Imagine, what can we do?" Ricardo said, adding, "We can't do anything. [Other] workers are doing their jobs now."

The guards insisted that they would not concede. "This ain't no puppet show," one guard said to co-workers

as they debated whether to return to work. "We can't be doing this halfway."

The Daily Herald spoke with Jacoba briefly Thursday, but she wasn't able to comment as she was in a Council of Ministers' meeting. All subsequent attempts to reach her in the evening failed.

Curaçao news reports said the minister was disappointed that ABVO had decided to strike two days after a meeting. An ABVO representative in Curaçao told reporters the union would only react to "black-on-white" agreements □

CBS: Unemployment rate up to 12.2 per cent

PHILIPSBURG--According to the Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS), unemployment in St. Maarten went up to 12.2 per cent in May-June 2009 in comparison to March-April 2007.

In a press release on Thursday CBS said that while employment had risen by three per cent (or 650 persons) over the survey period, the number of jobless persons had risen by more than 21 per cent or 520 persons.

According to CBS, 21,000 persons are now employed in St. Maarten. It said some 2,900 persons were now out of jobs.

"The unemployment rate went up from 10.6 percent in 2007 to 12.2 percent in 2009," CBS said. "The labour force increased by more than 1,100 persons, an increase more than five per cent. This is due to the rise in the number of employed and in the number of unemployed. The labour force presently consists of more than 24,000 persons."

According to CBS, the 5.1 per cent increase in the labour force remained just as high as the increase of the total population (4.8 per cent) and the participation rate remained practically unchanged. "It went from 59.4 per cent in 2007 to 59.5 per cent in 2009," CBS said.

The youth unemployment rate also increased from 26.0 percent in 2007 to 29.4 percent in 2009.

CBS conducted the Labour Force Survey (LFS) in St. Maarten in May-June 2009. The LFS is a sample survey among households that the CBS conducts periodically to measure the latest developments on the labour market: the unemployment rate, the participation rate, the number of employed and the number of unemployed.

The results are measured over two periods – March-April 2007 and May-June 2009 – and reflect the developments that have taken place between them.

The full CBS report is available at the Central Bureau of Statistics, W.G. Buncamper Road 33, Philipsburg. tel: 542-2355, e-mail info@cbs.an or www.cbs.an . □



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Stocks may climb, but beware of Scrooge

By Leah Schnurr

NEW YORK (Reuters)

— If the bulls have their way, Wall Street's rally will keep going this week on signs of stability in the labor market. But concerns about penny-pinching consumers during the holiday shopping season and the specter of higher interest rates may be a hurdle to jump. The Standard & Poor's 500 (.SPX) is up 63.5 percent from a 12-year closing low on March 9, while expectations of a significant sell-off before year's end have waned. Any dip is likely to be met with buyers eager to get into the market.

Investors are optimistic that the U.S. economy is on the path to recovery, albeit a slow one, after Friday's data showed employers cut far fewer jobs than expected in November.

Even so, worries that consumers will remain frugal during the holiday shopping season are keeping a lid on investors' enthusiasm. And after Friday's data showing the labor market picture improved in November, there's speculation that the Federal Reserve may have to raise interest rates sooner than previously expected.

Investors will watch this week's initial jobless claims report for further evidence that the job market is stabilizing, while a separate report on retail sales for November will show how stores fared during Black Friday. "The market's going to be really focused on anything to do with consumer spending and employment

data," said Scott Wren, senior equity strategist at Wells Fargo Advisors in St. Louis.

"Although I think there's not a lot of hope that we're going to see big, quick improvement in the employment numbers, certainly any surprise good news there, the market is going to like that."

Other data on tap includes a preliminary reading for December on consumer sentiment and the trade deficit for October.

Traders will also watch for any technical breakouts, with the S&P 500 facing resistance around the 1,115 level.

At Friday's close, the S&P 500 finished at 1,105.98, up 6.06 points, or 0.55 percent for the day, after earlier hitting a 15-month high at 1,119.13.

At Friday's close, the S&P 500 finished at 1,105.98, up 6.06 points, or 0.55 percent for the day, after earlier hitting a 15-month high at 1,119.13.

For the week, the Dow Jones industrial average (.DJI) added 0.8 percent, while the S&P 500 climbed 1.3 percent and the Nasdaq Composite Index (.IXIC) jumped 2.6 percent. Earlier during Friday's session, the Dow touched a 15-month high at 10,516.70 and the Nasdaq also reached a 15-month high at 2,214.39.

BOTH SIDES OF THE JOB SWORD

Government data on Friday showed the economy shed 11,000 jobs in November -- far less than the 130,000 lost jobs that analysts had forecast.

But the monthly payrolls report is a double-edged sword

for the U.S. stock market.

An economy that is recovering more quickly than expected could force the Fed to raise interest rates sooner than anticipated. Holding benchmark short-term U.S. interest rates near zero has been part of the Fed's strategy for the past year

to encourage lending and stimulate economic recovery. Investors are nervous about the central bank taking the protective flooring out from under the economy -- and the stock market -- too soon.

Talk of raising rates will keep the spotlight on the U.S. dollar, which has traded in an inverse relationship to stocks of late. Part of this is due to the carry trade, where investors borrow in a low-yielding currency and use the funds to invest in higher-yielding assets.

If expectations lean more toward a rate increase, investors will move out of carry trade bets. That would bolster the dollar and hurt stocks. "With the dollar rallying, that's telling us to some extent the Fed might have to react sooner," said Owen Fitzpatrick, head of the U.S. equity group at Deutsche Bank Private Wealth Management, in New York.

Currency traders will be among those tuning in to international trade gap report on Thursday, which is expected to show an October deficit of \$36.75 billion, compared with a deficit of \$36.47 billion in September. For details, see Analysts expect Thursday's weekly initial jobless claims



Shoppers look for bargains during Black Friday sales at a Best Buy store in Glendale, California November 27, 2009.

REUTERS/Phil McCarten

to grow to 460,000, up slightly from 457,000 the previous week, according to a Reuters poll.

SHOPPING WITH SCROOGE

Monthly retail sales for November will show how stores did during Black Friday, which was the day after Thanksgiving.

Black Friday traditionally marks the kickoff to the key holiday shopping season as retailers slash prices to lure consumers.

Early indications are that although shoppers were out in full force, they spent significantly less per person over the Black Friday weekend. Reports so far have indicated that Americans have been more inclined to channel their inner Scrooge -- making a list and sticking to it -- when doing their holiday shopping this year, instead of indulging their shopaholic tendencies.

Consumer spending has been a major driver of economic growth and it will be difficult for the recovery to gain traction without it.

Retail sales, due on Friday, are expected to grow 0.6 percent in November, compared with a gain of 1.4 percent in October. Excluding autos, retail sales are expected to rise 0.4 percent in November from 0.2 percent the previous month.

"All eyes are on to what extent the consumer shows up in any meaningful way this holiday season, and to what extent retailers are going to compete on prices in order to move goods," said Matt Kaufler, portfolio manager and equity analyst at Clover Capital Management in Rochester, New York.

Friday's preliminary look at December consumer sentiment will also provide insight on how willing consumers are to spend. □

AP: Manufacturing areas lead surprise job comeback



Rayford Sweet upholsters a chair at Legacy Furniture Group's manufacturing plant in Conover, N.C., Wednesday, Dec. 2, 2009. Legacy's recent success highlights a trend: Counties with the heaviest reliance on manufacturing income are posting some of the biggest employment gains of the nation's nascent economic recovery.

(AP Photo/Chuck Burton)

By MIKE BAKER,
Associated Press Writer
CONOVER, N.C. — As record

numbers of orders flow
through Legacy Furniture
Group's manufacturing plant,

workers toil between towers of piled foam and incomplete end tables precariously stacked five pieces high.

With a 10 percent sales growth this year, Legacy has quickly forgotten the recession's low point in March, when weak order volumes forced the company to implement four-day work weeks.

In November alone, the company that specializes in furniture for the medical industry added a half-dozen employees to its staff of 35. These days, everyone is clocking overtime and the 40,000-square-foot factory is starting to feel awfully cramped.

"We're starting to stack people instead of stacking furniture," jokes co-founder Todd Norris as he navigates rows of hand-

sanded chair frames.

Legacy's recent success highlights a trend: Counties with the heaviest reliance on manufacturing income are posting some of the biggest employment gains of the nation's early economic recovery. This is a big change from just half a year ago, when some economists worried that widespread layoffs by U.S. manufacturers might be part of an irreversible trend in that sector.

The Associated Press Economic Stress Index, a monthly analysis of the economic state of more than 3,100 U.S. counties, found that manufacturing counties have outperformed the national average since March. The Stress Index calculates a score from 1 to 100 based on

a county's unemployment, foreclosure and bankruptcy rates. The higher the number, the greater the county's level of economic stress.

The top 100 manufacturing counties with populations of more than 25,000 saw their Stress score drop slightly over the spring and summer quarters, largely due to improvements in the unemployment rate. By comparison, the national average of similar counties saw county Stress score increases of about 7 percent over the same time.

Economists say these counties may always have high rates of idled workers as technology replaces workers on the assembly line and companies find cheaper labor elsewhere. And manufacturing counties did have an average Stress score of 11.9 in September, while the top counties dedicated to hospitality were at 9.2.

But the early improvements in unemployment rates and manufacturing activity illustrate that there are, at the very least, signs of stability. U.S. manufacturers increased production by an average of 1.1 percent each month through July, August and September, before falling slightly, by 0.1 percent, in October, according to federal data.

Economists cite a range of potential explanations for the early resurgence, including the "Cash for Clunkers" program to stimulate car buying, a weak U.S. dollar to aid exports, the use of temporary workers, the need to replace depleted inventories, and stimulus money that is taking root.

All of which raises the question of whether the trend will last.

Here in Catawba County, where native hardwoods and access to power have made the region a historical hub for furniture manufacturing, the unemployment rate dropped from a peak of 15.6 in March to 13.6 percent in September. Elkhart County, Ind., meanwhile, saw such a startling surge in layoffs one year ago that President Barack Obama made a stop there in the opening weeks of his presidency. □

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Young stars honored in Hollywood



Actress AnnaLynne McCord arrives at the Variety Power of Youth event at Paramount Studios in Los Angeles on Saturday, Dec. 5, 2009.

(AP Photo/Dan Steinberg)

By DERRIK J. LANG,
AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES — One group of young Hollywood stars were in the spotlight Saturday — and it wasn't for getting into a fight outside a night club or being arrested for drunken driving.

Five under-25-year-old stars were lauded Saturday for their philanthropic work.

"High School Musical" actor Corbin Bleu, singer Jesse McCartney, "iCarly" star Miranda Cosgrove, "90210" actress AnnaLynne McCord and "True Jackson" star Keke Palmer were honored for their respective charity work at Variety's third annual Power of Youth event.

"I don't think of it as charity work because I have fun doing it," said Palmer, the Nickelodeon star who was recognized for her work with

the Boys and Girls Clubs of America.

Dozens of young celebs from shows like "Wizards of Waverly Place" and "The Secret Life of the American Teenager" and movies such as "Fame" and "The Twilight Saga" series attended the outdoor block party held on the New York street set at Paramount Studios in Hollywood.

McCartney, who was honored for his work with City of Hope, recently helped raise over \$800,000 along with Miley Cyrus and Demi Lovato at a special Nokia Theatre concert performance benefiting the comprehensive cancer center located northeast of Los Angeles.

"I'm just proud to speak out about something I'm passionate about," said McCartney.

"High School Musical" actor Bleu was recognized for his role as the Starlight Children's Foundation's new spokesman while "iCarly" star Cosgrove was honored for her work with the St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, which she has visited several times.

"I have met a lot of kids I saw in the hospital who did get better," said Cosgrove.

"That's always really amazing. I've become friends with a lot of the kids, too. I met a little girl named Sarah. She's just this really cool girl, and we e-mail each other." David Henrie from "Wizards of Waverly Place," Bailee Madison from "Brothers" and Harry Shum Jr. from "Glee" were among the young attendees who posed for pictures in a photobooth, played video games and scarfed down cupcakes, cotton candy and pizza.

"90210" actress McCord, who was honored as the goodwill ambassador for The Blind Project, a nonprofit organization which works to raise awareness and improve the quality of life for sex-trafficking victims, wished more young stars in Hollywood were involved.

"There's a lot of twentysomethings who are enjoying their twenties, and that's great," she said.

"But when you're privileged like we are as entertainers to make the money that we make and have the notoriety that we have, I think you owe it to the world to give back." □

Nicolas Cage wins UN award for humanitarian work

UNITED NATIONS — Nicolas Cage has won a U.N. award night for his humanitarian work and has been appointed a goodwill ambassador for the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon presented the actor and filmmaker with the U.N. Correspondents Association's Global Citizen of the Year award for humanitarian endeavors. Cage said his role will be "to shine a spotlight on the need for global justice."

The Amnesty International advocate has donated \$2 million to establish a fund to help former child soldiers and led a campaign around his film, "Lord of War," to raise awareness about international arms control.

The secretary-general also presented a Global Citizen of the Year award to William Roedy, chairman of MTV Networks International, for his work to combat HIV and AIDS. □



FILE- In this June 6, 2004 file photo, pianist, singer and songwriter, Alexa Ray Joel, left, joins her father, Billy Joel, for the arrivals of the 58th Annual Tony Awards at Radio City Music Hall, in New York. Alexa Ray Joel's publicist, Claire Mercuri, says that the performer has been hospitalized in New York on Saturday, Dec. 5, 2009 for an undisclosed condition.

(AP Photo/AP Photo/Diane Bondareff, File)

AP source: Billy Joel's daughter took pills in NYC

By COLLEEN LONG,
Associated Press Writer

NEW YORK — Alexa Ray Joel, the daughter of pop star Billy Joel and supermodel Christie Brinkley, was hospitalized after taking eight pills at her Manhattan apartment, a law enforcement official said Saturday.

A friend frantically called 911 shortly after noon Saturday from the singer's Greenwich Village apartment saying Joel, 23, had taken several pills, the official told The Associated Press. Joel took eight pills, though officials didn't know what kind she had ingested, an official said; it wasn't clear whether she had accidentally overdosed or attempted suicide, the official said.

The official wasn't authorized to publicly disclose the matter and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

Joel is hospitalized in stable condition and receiving treatment, Joel publicist Claire Mercuri said Saturday. She wouldn't elaborate.

"We are currently assessing her needs," she said.

Fire Department records indicate that paramedics responded to the West Village building where Joel lives at 12:21 p.m. Saturday and transported one woman to St. Vincent's Hospital. □

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Designer Accessories Remain Versatile for Spring, Emphasize Multipurpose Trends



Renata Espinosa

New York – A mix of sparkle, tribal, neutral tones, lucite and denim will be just some of the major trends seen in accessories next spring, said the Neiman Marcus accessory team in their latest presentation in New York on Wednesday, Dec. 2.

When it comes to tribal, think looks that would pair well with Yves Saint Laurent's safari classics, like arms covered with stacks of bangles by Lee Angel, or a floral fabric covered wooden heel from Baldan. Or

take Balmain's status gladiator sandals, which come in a woven tribal print version in spring, while the lace up buckle boot will come in a safari-ready olive green. This new earthier mood will also get some play in the form of fringed sandals and classic wedges and platforms in brown leathers from must-have designer brands like YSL and Prada. Also on the neutral end of the spectrum, for the second season in a row at Neiman Marcus, pale beiges and pinks continue to be a strong look.

"Nude is the new black for us," said Roopal Patel, Neiman Marcus' women's fashion accessory senior market editor. Denim also gets an haute facelift in the form of quilted bags by Lanvin, denim-covered ballet flats by Chanel and a denim version of YSL's Tribute platform sandal, which "goes great with all these safari looks we're seeing," said Patel.

But fans of more elaborate embellishments will still have plenty of options, too.

"Sequins and shine and sparkle have become almost a classic," said Patel. "You can wear it for day now. Miu Miu and Prada always has sparkle. It's fun and different from what she already owns."

For Spring 2010, Prada will lead the way with clear crystal looks, from PVC inserts in sandals to Lucite clasps on metallic handbags, while jewelry by Lee Angel, a Neiman Marcus go-to for sparkle around the wrist or neck, offers many ways to shine, though it's the wrist in particular, said Patel, that will be focus for Spring.

"We're moving away from the statement necklaces and putting more focus on the wrist," said Patel, also pointing to bangles by John Hardy and Alexis Bittar. The look with bracelets, she said, is to stack them up.

And the studded motorcycle look, for those with less glitzy yet still statement-making tastes, can get their fill with the unofficial reigning champion of the look, Balmain - a studded black leather purse is sure to make waves. □





FILE - Osama bin Laden is seen at an undisclosed location in this television image broadcast in this Oct. 7, 2001 file photo. Bin Laden praised God for the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks and swore America 'will never dream of security' until 'the infidel's armies leave the land of Muhammad,' in a videotaped statement aired after the strike launched Sunday by the U.S. and Britain in Afghanistan. Graphic at top right reads 'Exclusive to Al-Jazeera.' At bottom right is the station's logo which reads 'Al-Jazeera.' At top left is 'Recorded.' Bottom left is 'Urgent news.' At bottom center is 'Osama bin Laden, Leader of the al-Qaida.'

(AP Photo/Al Jazeera, File)
See Next Page

Obama tells Dems to keep up the health care fight

WASHINGTON – The White House says President Barack Obama has told Democratic senators to keep up the fight on health care legislation. Obama met with Democrats on Sunday afternoon as the Senate worked through the weekend on the president's top domestic priority. Deputy White House press secretary Bill Burton says Obama thanked Democrats for their hard work and encouraged them to keep at it. Obama says the legislation can provide stability and security for people already with insurance and can provide coverage for people without it. The president also says the overhaul would drive down costs for families, small businesses and the government. □



President Barack Obama walks into the Senate Democratic caucus on Capitol Hill in Washington Sunday, Dec. 6, 2009, to talk about health care overhaul.

(AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

2nd gay bishop for Episcopal Church, Anglicans



Delegates raise their ballots for Bishop Suffragan during the 114th Annual Meeting of the Diocese of Los Angeles for the Episcopal Church held in Riverside, Calif., on Friday, Dec. 4, 2009. The Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles elected the first female bishop, Rev. Diane M. Jardine Bruce, in its 114-year history.

(AP Photo/Francis Specker)

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER
and RACHEL ZOLL,
Associated Press Writers

LOS ANGELES – The Episcopal Diocese of Los Angeles has elected a lesbian as assistant bishop, the second openly gay bishop in the global Anglican fellowship, which is already deeply fractured over the first.

Continued on Page B3



Pakistan's Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, center, and Army Chief Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, left, attend funeral prayer for an army officer, who was killed in the Friday's suicide bombing in a mosque, Saturday, Dec. 5, 2009, in Rawalpindi, Pakistan. A Taliban suicide squad targeted Pakistani military officers and their families praying at a mosque close to army headquarters in a gruesome display of the militants' ability to strike at the center of power.

(AP Photo)

Pakistan police arrest gang accused in bombings

By RIAZ KHAN,
Associated Press Writer

PESHAWAR, Pakistan – Police commandos acting on a tip killed one militant and arrested five others Sunday in a raid against a bombing cell accused in recent attacks around the northwest Pakistani city of Peshawar, authorities said.

Continued on Page B6

Obama aide cites al-Qaida leader in Afghanistan



A hijacked commercial plane crashes into the World Trade Center on 11 September 2001 in New York. The threat posed by Al-Qaida remains strong, experts say, because as well as planning attacks, Osama bin Laden's organisation is continuing to inspire others.

By **ROBERT BURNS,**

AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON — Osama bin Laden may be slipping back and forth from Pakistan to Afghanistan. Or the U.S. might not have a clue, more than eight years after the al-Qaida leader masterminded the terrorist attacks on America.

Given a chance Sunday to clear away some of the mystery surrounding the whereabouts of the world's most wanted terrorist, Obama administration officials seemed to add to it with what appeared to be conflicting assessments.

President Barack Obama's national security adviser, James Jones, said that bin Laden, believed hiding

(*AFP/File/Seth Mcallister*)

mainly in a rugged area of western Pakistan, may be periodically slipping back into Afghanistan. But Obama's Pentagon chief, Robert Gates, said the U.S. has lacked good intelligence on bin Laden for a long time — "I think it has been years" — and did not confirm that he'd slipped into Afghanistan.

The failed hunt for bin Laden has been one of the signature frustrations of the global war on terrorism that former President George W. Bush launched after the Sept. 11 attacks. The main explanation given by both the Bush and Obama administrations for not getting bin Laden is that they simply don't know where he is.

"If we did, we'd go get him,"

Gates said.

Jones, a retired Marine general, stressed the urgency of targeting bin Laden, and spoke of a renewed campaign to capture or kill him. Bin Laden had been sheltered in Afghanistan by Taliban allies while plotting the Sept. 11 attacks. When U.S. forces ousted the Taliban in late 2001, bin Laden fled into Pakistan from his mountain redoubt.

Asked on CNN's "State of the Union" whether the administration has reliable intelligence on bin Laden's whereabouts, Jones replied, "The best estimate is that he is somewhere in North Waziristan, sometimes on the Pakistani side of the border, sometimes on the Afghan side of the border." He did not comment on the intelligence behind that estimate, nor did he cite a time period or describe more specifically bin Laden's apparent border crossings.

Gates told ABC's "This Week" that "we don't know for a fact where Osama bin Laden is," although he agreed that his likely location is North Waziristan.

That's part of the loosely governed Federally Administered Tribal Areas of northwest Pakistan where the border with Afghanistan is largely unrecognized and unmarked. There is little

Pakistani government or military control in this remote region, and militants affiliated with al-Qaida can move freely across the frontier into Afghanistan.

The U.S. has targeted North Waziristan and other areas on the Pakistan side of the border with drone-launched missile strikes, killing substantial numbers of militants as well as Pakistani civilians.

The Pakistani army has undertaken an offensive against Taliban militants in South Waziristan but it has not expanded the effort into North Waziristan.

Obama administration officials have often asserted, as did the Bush administration, that they believe bin Laden is being sheltered on the Pakistani side of the border, along with other senior al-Qaida leaders. But Jones broke new ground by saying publicly that the al-Qaida chief may have slipped back into Afghanistan.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., made a somewhat similar, if less specific, remark Sunday about bin Laden's movements. He told NBC's "Meet the Press" that knowledgeable people have told him that bin Laden "moves back and forth."

McCain did not elaborate, except to say that although bin Laden is not currently able to establish bases for training and equipping terrorists who

would attack the United States, "I think it's important to get him."

Gates said he does not blame a lack of Pakistani cooperation for the absence of intelligence on bin Laden.

"No, I think it's because if, as we suspect, he is in North Waziristan, it is an area that the Pakistani government has not had a presence in, in quite some time," Gates said, adding that although the Pakistani government has its own priorities, any pressure it brings on the Taliban is helpful because it is in league with al-Qaida.

During a visit to Pakistan in late October, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton caused a stir by chiding Pakistani officials for failing to press the hunt for al-Qaida inside their borders. She said she found it "hard to believe" that no one in Islamabad knows where the al-Qaida leaders are hiding and couldn't get them "if they really wanted to."

Gates said he could not confirm recent news reports that bin Laden had been seen in Afghanistan earlier this year. BBC News reported last week that a Taliban detainee in Pakistan claimed to have met in January or February with an unidentified associate who said he had seen bin Laden just days earlier in Afghanistan, possibly in Ghazni province. □

Ohio inmate to get 1-drug, slower, execution

By **ANDREW WELSH-HUGGINS,**

Associated Press Writer

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Condemned killer Kenneth Biros could become the first person in the country put to death with a single dose of an intravenous anesthetic instead of the usual — and faster-acting — three-drug process if his execution proceeds Tuesday.

The execution could propel other states to eventually consider the switch, which proponents say ends arguments over unnecessary suffering during injection. California and Tennessee previously considered then rejected the one-drug approach. Though the untested method has never been used on an inmate in the United States, one difference is clear: Biros will likely die more slowly than inmates put to death with the three-drug method, which includes a drug that stops the heart.

Lethal injection experts on both sides of the debate over injection say thiopental sodium, which kills by putting people so deeply asleep

they stop breathing, will take longer.

How much longer is unclear: Mark Dershwitz, an anesthesiologist who advised Ohio on its switch to the single drug, has written death should occur in under 15 minutes.

Ohio inmates have typically taken about seven minutes to die after the three-drug IV injection, which combines thiopental sodium with the drugs pancuronium bromide — which paralyzes muscles — and potassium chloride, which causes cardiac arrest. Dershwitz also said in a court filing last week that a single dose of thiopental sodium would take longer than the three drugs, though he didn't specify a time. The switch from three drugs to one was ordered last month because of the state's botched attempt on Sept. 15 to execute convicted rapist and killer Romell Broom. His executioners tried unsuccessfully for two hours to find a usable vein for injection, painfully hitting bone and muscle in as many as 18 needle sticks. Gov. Ted Strickland halted the execution. □



FILE - In this Jan. 8, 2007 file photo, Sharon King, left, wipes a tear as Debi Heiss recounts the murder of her sister Tami Engstrom in Warren, Ohio. Condemned Ohio killer Kenneth Biros could become the first person in the country put to death with one dose of an intravenous anesthetic if his execution proceeds Tuesday. The execution method, which replaces the faster-acting three-drug process could propel other states to eventually consider the switch. Biros was convicted of killing Tami Engstrom in February 1991.

(*AP Photo/Tony Dejak, File*)

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2 men, 43 horses killed in barn fire in Ohio

LEBANON, Ohio – A fire ripped through a horse barn at a county fairgrounds Saturday in southwest Ohio, killing two men and 43 horses, authorities said.

The barn roof had already collapsed by the time firefighters arrived at the Warren County Fairgrounds, about 25 miles northeast of Cincinnati, according to Capt. Krista Wyatt of the Lebanon Fire Department. The fire was reported about 5 a.m.

The bodies of the men were pulled from the barn and were badly burned, said Shane Cartmill, a spokesman for the Ohio State Fire Marshal.

A horse owner identified the men as Ronnie Williams and James Edwards, both trainers at a harness racing racetrack based at the fairgrounds. Victor Gray, who owned three of the horses that died, said he'd known Williams nearly 40 years. Cartmill was unable to confirm the identities late Saturday. Lamar Moody, lead trainer at Lebanon Raceway, said two of his employees were not accounted for.

No one was supposed to be in the stables overnight and it was not clear if the two men



The remains of a horse barn at the Lebanon Fairgrounds in Lebanon, Ohio are shown on Saturday, Dec. 5, 2009 after a fire ripped through it that killed two people and about sixty horses. Capt. Krista Wyatt with the Lebanon Fire Department said the fire was reported about 5 a.m. Saturday. She said the barn's roof had already collapsed by the time firefighters arrived at the Warren County Fairgrounds, about 25 miles northeast of Cincinnati.

(AP Photo/The Dayton Daily News, Ron Alvey)

killed were working early or sleeping in the barn.

"It's a terrible situation," said Gray, a Lebanon resident. "This is something that didn't have to happen."

The cause of the blaze was under investigation, but state fire investigators say they have ruled out criminal intent.

Horse owners stood stunned as they watched heavy machinery peel back the metal roof of the collapsed

structure so firefighters could sift through the debris and extinguish what remained of the blaze. The barn was about the length of a football field.

The horses weren't pets but nonetheless were "part of the family, our kids," Gray said. "We loved those horses."

In 1988, a fire in a similar part of the county-owned racetrack and fairgrounds killed 35 horses. No one was killed in that fire. □

1 shot, another beaten in fight at Baltimore hotel

BALTIMORE – One man was shot in the face and another was severely beaten when a fight erupted early Sunday morning during a birthday party at a downtown Baltimore hotel, police said.

Officers were called to the Sheraton Baltimore City Center Hotel around 3:15 a.m., said Baltimore police spokesman Anthony Guglielmi. Shortly after police arrived, they found an Uzi submachine gun in a room where the party was held.

Police said they have a "person of interest" in custody but did not say who that was. Investigators were still interviewing about a dozen witnesses Sunday morning.

The man who was shot was in serious condition, and the man who was beaten was in critical condition. Both 18-year-olds were taken to the University of Maryland Shock Trauma Center.

The second man was beaten so severely that officers initially reported he had been shot, Guglielmi said.

Another man who had facial lacerations initially had been described as critically injured, though Guglielmi said the wounds turned out to be superficial.

None of the victims' names was released.

A man who answered the telephone at the hotel said he could not comment on the shooting. □

GAY BISHOP

Continued from Page B1

Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, spiritual leader of the world's 77 million Anglicans, said Sunday that the choice raised "very serious questions" for the divided church and urged restraint.

The Rev. Mary Glasspool of Baltimore needs approval from a majority of dioceses across the church before she can be consecrated as assistant bishop in the Los Angeles diocese.

Still, her victory Saturday underscored a continued Episcopal commitment to accepting same-sex relationships despite enormous pressure from other Anglicans to change their stand.

"Any group of people who have been oppressed because of any one, isolated aspect of their persons yearns for justice and equal rights," Glasspool said in a statement, thanking the diocese for choosing her.

The head of the Episcopal Church, Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori, is scheduled to consecrate Glasspool on May 15 in Los Angeles, if the church accepts the vote.

The Episcopal Church, which is the Anglican body in the United States, caused an uproar in 2003 by consecrating the first openly gay bishop, V. Gene Robinson of New Hampshire.

Breakaway Episcopal conservatives have formed a rival church, the Anglican Church in North America. Several overseas Anglicans have been pressuring Williams to officially recognize the new conservative entity.

In 2004, Anglican leaders asked the Episcopal Church for a moratorium on electing another gay bishop while they tried to prevent a permanent break in the fellowship.

Since the request was made, some Episcopal gay priests have been nominated for bishop, but none was elected before Glasspool. Last July, the Episcopal General Convention, the U.S. church's top policy making body, affirmed that gay and lesbian priests were eligible to become bishops.

Williams on Sunday reminded Anglicans that church leaders believed "a period of gracious restraint in respect of actions which are contrary to the mind of the Communion is necessary if our bonds of mutual affection are to hold."

He said Glasspool's election "raises very serious questions not just for the Episcopal Church and its place in the Anglican Communion, but for the Communion as a whole." But he noted the election has yet to be confirmed and could still be rejected by U.S. dioceses.

The Anglican Communion is a family of churches that trace their roots to the missionary work of the Church of England. Most overseas Anglicans are Bible conservatives.

The Rev. Kendall Harmon of the traditional Diocese of South Carolina, which recently voted to distance itself from the national church, said Saturday's vote would further damage relations among Episcopalians, their fellow Anglicans and other Christians.

"This decision represents an intransigent embrace of a pattern of life Christians throughout history and the world have rejected as against biblical teaching," said Harmon, an adviser to the diocesan bishop. □

Mass. Sen. hopefuls working to get voters to polls



In this Nov. 20, 2009 photo provided by the Alan Khazei campaign, Caroline Kennedy, left, daughter of President John F. Kennedy, speaks with Alan Khazei, right, Democratic hopeful for the U.S. Senate seat left behind by the death of U.S. Senator Edward Kennedy, during a fundraiser at the home of New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, in New York.

(AP Photo/Khazei Campaign, Diane Bondareff)

By **STEVE LeBLANC**,
Associated Press Writer

BOSTON — Forget the ads, debates and endorsements. Come Tuesday, the only thing that matters for the candidates vying for the late Edward Kennedy's Senate seat is getting more of their voters to the polls than anyone else.

A strong field operation, key in any major campaign, is all the more critical given the odd timing of the Massachusetts primary in early December

and the fact that there are no other races on the ballot.

"This is a very unusual situation," said Secretary of State William Galvin, who predicted voter turnout could be as low as 300,000 to 500,000.

"We've never had a statewide special election. And it's in the winter, and now I'm hearing about snow. And it's coming during the holiday season," he said.

Each of the four Democratic

candidates — Attorney General Martha Coakley, U.S. Rep. Michael Capuano, Boston Celtics co-owner Stephen Pagliuca and City Year co-founder Alan Khazei — are playing to their strengths heading into the campaign's final 48 hours as they try to sew up their party's nomination.

Coakley, hoping to become the first woman elected from Massachusetts to the U.S. Senate, has drawn backing from female lawmakers and activists, from state Senate President Therese Murray to Ms. magazine founder Gloria Steinem to the pro-abortion rights group EMILY's List.

Coakley, leading in most polls, says she's not trying to take advantage of her position as the only female candidate, but a strong showing from female voters could prove critical on Tuesday.

Like the other candidates, Coakley is taking to the road in the final days and ramping up her get-out-the-vote drive. Coakley spokesman Corey Welford said the campaign has spent months identifying voters and is planning on

making thousands of phone calls to remind supporters to head to the polls.

"We're taking no vote for granted," Welford said.

Capuano knows the benefits of a strong field operation.

In 1998, Capuano was a five-term mayor of Somerville when he jumped into an open race for the Congressional district that gave Massachusetts Tip O'Neill and John F. Kennedy. Then-Rep. Joseph P. Kennedy II had decided not to seek re-election.

In a 10-way race that included a couple of millionaire candidates and former Boston Mayor Ray Flynn, Capuano was able to use his base of support in Somerville to capture 24 percent of the primary vote — enough to win the Democratic nomination, and eventually the seat in Congress.

Capuano, who has portrayed himself as the working class underdog in the race, is hoping to repeat that kind of upset on Tuesday.

"We've been steadily reaching out and identifying our voters and will be continuing to phone bank through the weekend

and on Election Day," said campaign spokeswoman Alison Mills.

Pagliuca, a multimillionaire, has spent millions of his own money to flood television, radio and Web sites with ads as he tries to overcome a name recognition gap compared to Coakley and Capuano.

The political newcomer's campaign has been collecting names of supporters and has also been going door-to-door to urge people to vote Tuesday, according to campaign aide Matt O'Malley.

O'Malley said the campaign is relying on "tried and true" methods like phone banks and bus tours, as well as new media techniques to help get supporters to the polls.

"Steve's not a politician and I think that's playing very much in our favor," O'Malley said. "We're really excited. Our momentum is really building."

Khazei, who's spent his adult life helping build the nonprofit service organization City Year, is courting the same young voters and first-time voters that helped propel both Gov. Deval Patrick and President Barack Obama into office.

Getting those voters to the polls could be a challenge, and Khazei's campaign is using old and new techniques to rally support — from knocking on doors to posting on social media sites like Facebook and Twitter.

"We have a massive get-out-the-vote drive," said Khazei spokesman Dave Jacobson.

The campaign hopes to knock on 50,000 doors in the final few days of the campaign. It also has phone banks going day and night to contact both undecided voters and supporters to remind them to make it to the polls.

State Sen. Scott Brown of Wrentham and Duxbury attorney Jack E. Robinson are competing for the Republican nomination.

Brown has the endorsements of virtually every major GOP figure in the state and is considered the front-runner against Robinson, who has run and lost three prior campaigns.

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Wis. man wanted in double homicides eludes police

By **TODD RICHMOND**,
Associated Press Writer

MADISON, Wis. — Police sought help from the public Saturday as the search for a Wisconsin man wanted in the deaths of his two young daughters and their mothers stretched into its third day.

Authorities released no new details on the slayings but continued to call 38-year-old Tyrone Adair armed and dangerous.

He has strong family ties to the Madison area, but so far has eluded capture. Police have warned law enforcement agencies nationwide to watch for him.

"We're just encouraging anyone who has any information at all to come forward," Madison Police Lt. Wayne Strong said.

Prosecutors charged Adair, of suburban Middleton, on Friday with two counts of first-degree intentional homicide in the deaths of 33-year-old Tracy Judd and 23-month-old Deja Adair, Judd and Adair's daughter.

They also consider him a "person of interest" in the killings of 25-year-old Amber Weigel and 2-year-old Neveah Weigel-Adair, Weigel and Adair's daughter.

His family issued a statement through police late Saturday evening pleading with Adair to surrender "immediately." "Before anyone else is hurt please turn yourself in," the statement said.

Dorothy Carter, Adair's grandmother, told The Associated Press on Saturday he lost his job at Clack

Corporation, a water-treatment component manufacturer in Windsor.

"He's always been a good guy," Carter said, fighting back tears. "He likes to prepare Christmas for his kids ... for him to be out of work this time of year and not have any money at all ... and he's not the type of kid who would ask for anything. I know it wasn't right what he did."

"He was depressed. I know that's no excuse, but that's what happened."

Two Clack employees who would not give their names declined comment on Adair's status with the company when The Associated Press contacted the company Friday. Peter Chermak, the company's vice president and CEO, told the Wisconsin State Journal for Saturday's editions that Adair hadn't worked there for six months.



This undated photo provided Friday, Dec. 4, 2009 by the Dane County, Wis. Sheriff's Department via the Wisconsin State Journal shows Tyrone Adair. Police believe the fatal shootings of a mother and her young daughter in Madison were connected to the slayings of another woman and young girl in a nearby suburb, and authorities were searching Friday for Adair as a "person of interest" in all four deaths.

(AP Photo/ Dane County Sheriff's Department)

Chermak didn't immediately return a message left at his office Saturday and no home listing for him could be found.

Court records show Adair has convictions for battery and bail jumping. A woman took out a restraining order on him in 2006, alleging he stalked her, slashed her tires and destroyed her computer, phone, television and bed.

He also was involved in paternity cases with both Judd and Weigel over his children. Court records indicated Judd was a stay-at-home mother.

Jason Graser, Judd's ex-husband, declined comment Saturday. Jackie Scott, co-

owner of Scott's Pastry Shop in Middleton, said Judd worked there about eight years ago. She said Judd was outgoing and well-liked.

The Montessori Children's House in Madison employed Weigel as an assistant teacher. Weigel's family issued a statement through police calling her "a loving girlfriend, a dedicated mother, and a loyal friend and ally to many people." The family said her daughter was "full of spark and personality."

The family went on to ask their friends to ensure the family's safety by not making comments or giving out any information. □

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A Pakistani police officer stands guard as volunteers carry a body of suspected militant, killed by security forces, for burial in Tamirgrah, the main town of Pakistan's Lower Dir district, Sunday, Dec. 6, 2009. Security forces killed eight alleged militants hiding in a house in the Maidan area in Lower Dir district, Maj. Suleman Hanif an army spokesman said. The soldiers recovered weapons including two rocket launchers and eight assault rifles.

(AP Photo/Rohullah Shakir)

PAKISTAN BOMBIG

Continued from Page B1

Elsewhere in the volatile region, a remote-controlled

roadside bomb killed two anti-Taliban tribal elders — underscoring the difficulty Pakistan faces in cracking

down on the loose and flexible network of militants threatening its stability. Police said the commandos encountered fierce resistance when they stormed the compound in the village of Kaka Khel near Peshawar, the largest city in the area and the main gateway to the Afghan border region where many al-Qaida and Taliban insurgents are based.

Militants have carried out a wave of deadly attacks in and around Peshawar in apparent retaliation for an army offensive in the tribal area of South Waziristan.

Three suicide jackets as well as a number of bombs, grenades, rocket-propelled grenades and other weapons were seized from the compound, regional police Chief Liaquat Ali Khan said.

He said one suspect was killed and five others arrested following a gunbattle that lasted more than two hours.

A search operation for more militants continued in the area, some 30 miles (50 kilometers) east of Peshawar.

The detained are suspected of involvement in recent bombings and other attacks not only in Peshawar but in Islamabad and its sister city of Rawalpindi, Khan said, declining to be more specific. In the latest major attack, a team of gunmen and suicide bombers struck a mosque Friday in Rawalpindi, killing 37 people, including several senior army officers.

Militants also have tried to weaken the long-standing tribal leadership structure in the northwest, killing scores of elders so they could impose their own reign.

The roadside bomb that killed two elders Sunday in the Bajur tribal region also left two other tribesmen wounded, local government official Jamil Khan said. The two dead elders were on foot, leaving a

mosque in the Malangi area after prayers.

Pakistani security forces also killed 13 suspected militants, including a prominent commander identified as Gul Maula, in gunbattles in two other parts of the northwest over the weekend.

Maj. Mushtaq Ahmed, a military spokesman, said Maula and four others were killed in the Dangram area of the Swat Valley, where the suspected militants were spotted trying to sneak through the mountains to the main town of Mingora. Pakistan's army has waged an offensive against the Taliban in Swat for much of this year.

In the neighboring region of Lower Dir, security forces killed eight alleged militants hiding in a house in the Maidan area, said Maj. Suleman Hanif, another army spokesman. The soldiers recovered weapons including two rocket launchers and eight assault rifles. □

Iraq clears way for parliamentary elections

By BRIAN MURPHY,
Associated Press Writer

BAGHDAD — Iraqi lawmakers approved plans Sunday to hold parliament elections early next year that are seen as an important step toward political reconciliation and easing the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

The vote — during an emergency session convened just before a midnight deadline — followed marathon talks by political leaders to break an impasse over balloting provisions that would satisfy the nation's rival groups.

"I would like to congratulate the Iraqi people for this historical victory," said Vice President Tariq al-Hashemi, who had held up the elections for weeks with a veto. He also hailed political leaders for compromises that "got Iraq out from the bottleneck and out of a problem."

A failure to pass new elections rules on Sunday would have forced Iraq to revert to those used in its last parliament election in 2005 and likely throw the political process into a tailspin.

Plans for the election had been mired for weeks over al-Hashemi's demands for a greater political voice for minority Sunnis and the distribution of seats in Iraq's expanded 325-seat parliament.

The election is scheduled for Jan. 16, but a delay of a month or more now appears likely. A longer postponement could have complicated the withdrawal timetable for U.S. forces, which are scheduled to end combat missions in August. The full details of the pact were not immediately clear. But it appeared to resolve objections from al-Hashemi, who vetoed the election law to demand equal voting rights for Iraqis living abroad — mostly fellow Sunnis whose votes could increase Sunni clout in the next parliament.

Kurds also had objected to the distribution of seats among the country's 18 provinces, claiming they were being under-represented at the expense of Sunnis and majority Shiites, who suffered widespread repression under Saddam Hussein but took command of Iraqi's political leadership and security forces after his fall. The next election will also be a critical test for the Shiite-led government of Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, which has staked its future on a broad pro-Western political coalition with Sunnis and other factions. His main challenge comes from within the Shiite ranks: an alliance of religious-oriented Shiite parties that include the biggest Shiite political group and anti-U.S. cleric Muqtada al-Sadr.

The new parliament will be expanded from the current 275 seats to 325, said Deputy Parliament Speaker Khalid al-Attayah. At least 15 seats are set aside for religious and ethnic minorities such as Christians and Turkomen.

In an apparent concession to the Kurds, some seats that had been shifted to Sunni areas were returned, said al-Attayah. Kurds, who are overwhelmingly Muslim, also received two of the special minority seats for Christian Kurds. Another important change also was agreed for the coming election: voting lists will be "open" and have all the names of the candidates. In past elections, voters had a so-called "closed list" with only the parties — which then announced their parliament members after the ballots were counted.

"It will be an open list election," said al-Attayah.

There was tremendous pressure to reach an accord. Al-Hashemi's veto expired Sunday and he had threatened to reinstate it if his demands were not met. □



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R	NEX DAY AIR	daily: matinee:		9:00 late show:	11:00	
PG	OLD DOGS	daily: matinee:	4:15 12:15	6:15 2:15	8:15 late show: 12:15	
PG-13	2012	daily: matinee:	4:15 12:45	7:45 late show:	11:15	
G	SINTERKLAAS EN DE VERDWENEN PAKJESBOOT	daily: matinee:	4:45 12:15	2:30 late show:		
PG-13	THE TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON	daily: matinee:	6:00 12:15	9:00 late show:	11:45	

AT PASEO HERENCIA

PG-13	EVERYBODY'S FINE	daily: matinee:	4:30 12:00	6:45 2:15	9:00 late show: 11:15	NEW
G	THE PRINCESS AND THE FROG	daily: matinee:	4:45 12:15	2:30 late show:		NEW
PG-13	THE TWILIGHT SAGA: NEW MOON	daily: matinee:	5:30 12:00	8:30 late show:	11:30	
R	LAW ABIDING CITIZEN	daily: matinee:		9:15 late show:	12:00	
PG-13	2012	daily: matinee:	4:30 1:00	8:00 late show:	11:15	
PG-13	COUPLES RETREAT	daily: matinee:	7:15	9:45 late show:	12:15	
PG-13	WHERE THE WILD THINGS ARE	daily: matinee:	5:00 12:30	2:45 late show:		
R	PARANORMAL ACTIVITY	daily: matinee:	7:00	9:15 late show:	11:30	
PG	A CHRISTMAS CAROL 3D	daily: matinee:	4:45 12:15	7:00 late show:		3D

Matinee: sat & sun | Late show: fri & sat



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Karzai urges flexibility for U.S. troop timeline

By Jeff Mason

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – Afghan President Hamid Karzai raised doubts on Sunday that his country could take over responsibility for its security by July 2011, while U.S. leaders said the date was not a “drop-dead” deadline for Kabul.

U.S. President Barack Obama announced last week he would send another 30,000 troops to Afghanistan but would begin bringing them home in 18 months and start handing off responsibilities then to Afghan forces.

Karzai, speaking on CNN’s “Amanpour” program, said Afghanistan would try to meet that timetable, but he suggested a two-year timeframe was more likely.

“We will try our best,” Karzai said.

“But the international community must have also the patience with us and the realization of the realities in Afghanistan. If it takes longer, then they must be with us.”

Obama administration officials have been interpreting the president’s goal since his announcement last Tuesday, trying to address political pressures at home while sending a signal of urgency to Karzai’s government.

Obama has faced criticism

from fellow Democrats for the troop increase and outrage from opposition Republicans about the deadline for a drawdown.

“We’re not talking about an exit strategy or a drop-dead deadline,” Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told NBC’s “Meet the Press” program. “What we’re talking about is an assessment that ... we can begin a transition, a transition to hand off responsibility to the Afghan forces.”

Defense Secretary Robert Gates said Obama’s speech was meant to show resolve while also communicating the urgent need for Afghanistan to recruit, train and move soldiers into the field. Gates, however, also played down the July 2011 date.

“It’s the beginning of a process,” he told CBS’s “Face the Nation” program.

“In July 2011, our generals are confident that they will know whether our strategy is working.

And the plan is to begin transferring areas of responsibility for security over to the Afghan security forces with ... us remaining in a tactical and then strategic oversight position,” he said.

AFGHAN TIMELINE, CORRUPTION

Karzai said he had no control

over U.S. or NATO timelines but indicated Afghan forces needed two years to be ready to take over security responsibility for areas in the country.

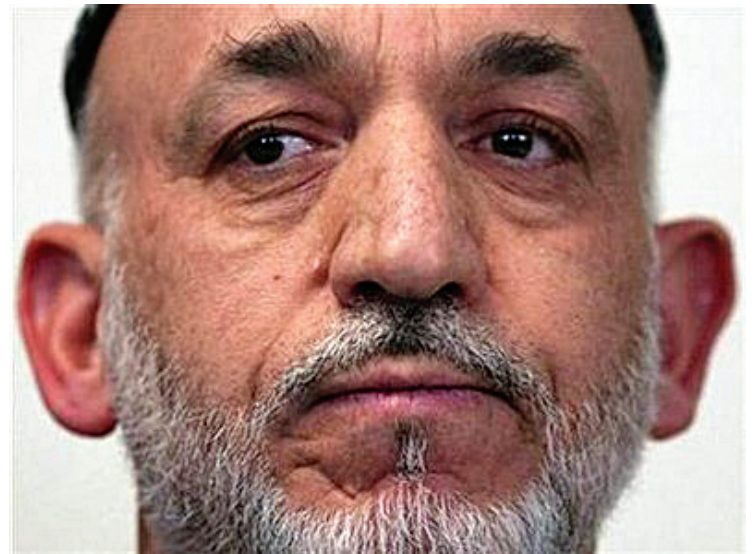
“We want to have in Afghanistan, in another two years, the ability to lead operations and provide security for the Afghan people in many parts of the country,” he said.

“By the end of five years term of-- of the current government, we plan to lead operations for the security of the Afghan people in all of Afghanistan, in the whole country. That is our objective.”

Karzai’s reputation was severely damaged after a U.N.-backed inquiry found nearly a third of votes cast for him in an August 20 election were fake. He pledged in his inauguration speech to name competent and honest ministers. His cabinet is expected to be announced in the coming days.

Obama has put significant pressure on Karzai to address the problem, and Afghan leader said he was doing so.

“If and when at any time there is an occasion where we need to act on corruption with ministers, with officials, with anybody, we will do that,” Karzai said, while adding



Afghanistan’s President Hamid Karzai speaks during a news conference in Kabul in this October 20, 2009 file photo.

REUTERS/Ahmad Masood

that some in the international community had overplayed the issue.

“I have fired people, and I will be firing people,” he said.

Richard Holbrooke, the U.S. special envoy to Afghanistan and Pakistan, said corruption was a concern that had to be viewed in context.

“We remain concerned about the corruption issue ... that

is a matter of high concern for us,” Holbrooke said on CNN’s “Fareed Zakaria GPS” program.

“At the same time, I think we have to be realistic,” Holbrooke said, noting that Afghanistan was not an easily governable country and lacked a centralized government. “It’s complicated, its diverse, its very poor,” he said. □



Aruba TODAY

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Morales highly favored for re-election in Bolivia



Bolivia's President Evo Morales casts his ballot during general elections in Villa 14 de Septiembre village in central Bolivia, Sunday, Dec. 6, 2009. Morales is seeking reelection.

(AP Photo/Juan Karita)

By FRANK BAJAK,
Associated Press Writer

LA PAZ, Bolivia — President Evo Morales, a coca-grower at odds with Washington but hugely popular at home for empowering Bolivia's long-suppressed indigenous majority, was expected to coast to re-election on Sunday. Such a victory would augur further revolutionary change, though opponents say they fear Morales will use a consolidation of power to trample human rights and deepen state control of the economy.

Voters also were choosing a new Congress in the balloting, which officials said was peaceful and without serious irregularities. Morales' stridently leftist Movement Toward Socialism is hoping for a two-thirds majority in the legislature so it can dictate terms of a law on indigenous territorial self-rule.

A super-majority would also give the 50-year-old incumbent the votes needed to amend the constitution so he could run for a third straight term, though he has been evasive on the issue.

"We'll always back Evo Morales' government because he takes into account the poor," said Ramiro Cano, a 40-year-old jeweler and a member of Bolivia's dominant Aymara ethnic group who voted to give Morales five more years in office.

Cano praised Morales especially for the annual subsidy his two children receive for attending school. "He's been a great help not just for me but for all families in need."

Nearly six of 10 Bolivians live in poverty.

Morales has used increased profits from Bolivia's natural gas industry, which he nationalized in May 2006, to provide some relief — funding the highly popular subsidies for schoolchildren and the elderly as well as one-time payments for new mothers. Higher prices for the natural gas and minerals that together account for the bulk of Bolivia's exports helped the country's economy grow 6 percent last year. The government expects 3 percent growth this year.

A victory by Morales, who led opinion polls with about 55 percent support, would extend the stability he has brought to a country notorious for coups and that had five presidents in the five years preceding his December 2005 election.

The vote comes under a new constitution ratified by voters in January that allowed Morales to run for a second

term and that remade Bolivia as a "plurinational" state, allowing self-rule for the poor South American country's 36 native peoples.

Twelve of Bolivia's more than 330 municipalities were voting Sunday on indigenous autonomy, which would allow them to abandon modern political structures in favor of traditional Indian governance based on consensus-building. Still to be defined by the new Congress are larger territorial autonomies for indigenous groups that could redraw the political map and redefine how government funds are disbursed.

A llama-herder's son, Morales has championed all of Bolivia's Indians — at the expense of wealthy ranchers and farmers centered in the eastern lowlands. He has been careful, however, not to alienate too many landholders with a land redistribution program in which confiscation of fallow land has been modest.

Pre-election polls put Morales far out in front of his nearest competitor in a field of nine candidates. Manfred Reyes, a former military officer and state governor associated with the previous discredited ruling class, had 20 percent support. A more centrist opposition candidate, cement magnate Samuel Doria Medina, was running third.

Reyes' running mate, Leopoldo Fernandez, is in jail, accused of backing a massacre

of Morales supporters in 2008 as a state governor. In a news conference from the prison Sunday, he accused Morales of obstructionism, which he said is impeding the country's growth.

"The government has demonstrated that if things aren't done its way, the country doesn't advance," Fernandez said.

Other Morales detractors say the president is leading Bolivia down the same path as what they call President Hugo Chavez's totalitarian socialism, while similarly forging dangerous alliances with Iran and Russia.

"He's created a tyranny," said Mario Orellana, a 65-year-old retired army colonel who said he voted for Reyes. "He does what he likes. There's not democracy."

Besides tightening state control over the gas, oil and mining sectors, Morales has nationalized the main phone company and signaled his intention to take over the electrical power industry.

"Sooner or later he'll nationalize the banks," said Victor Hugo Cardenas, a former vice president and Morales critic whose house was ransacked by a pro-Morales mob earlier this year. But many analysts believe Morales will be careful not to alienate the foreign investors he needs to increase raw materials output — they just won't be able to own the mines and wells. □

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Knox upset, tired; gets family visit in prison

By ALESSANDRA RIZZO
and MARTA FALCONI,
Associated Press Writers

PERUGIA, Italy — Amanda Knox sought comfort from visiting family members Saturday on her first day in prison since being convicted of murdering her British roommate.

The family of victim Meredith Kercher said the verdict brought a measure of justice. However, they said, it was not a time to celebrate.

Knox, a college student from Seattle, was tired and upset following the midnight verdict and sentence of 26 years in prison, according to family members and a lawyer who saw her. "Amanda like the rest is extremely disappointed, upset about the decision," Knox's mother, Edda Mellas, said after the visit to the prison just outside Perugia. "We told her that she's gonna get out of here. It's gonna take a little longer."

Knox and Kercher's families came to this central Italian town for the verdict, which was announced at around midnight after 13 hours of deliberations. The court also convicted Knox's co-defendant and former boyfriend, Italian Raffaele

Sollecito, and gave him a 25-year jail term for the murder.

Knox and Sollecito are appealing the verdicts.

"She couldn't sleep all night," said lawyer Luciano Ghirga, who spent an hour with Knox at her jail just outside Perugia on Saturday morning. "She's worried for her parents, too, but she is keeping the faith needed for the next steps."

Ghirga said Knox was kept under strict surveillance. He denied reports that she had been put under suicide watch, which is the standard practice in such cases.

Kercher, 21, was Knox's roommate while they studied in Perugia.

Her body was found in a pool of blood with her throat slit on Nov. 2, 2007, at the apartment they shared. Prosecutors said the Leeds University student was murdered the previous night.

"Meredith still leaves a big hole in our lives and her presence is missed every time we meet up as a family," John Kercher Jr., one of her brothers, told a press conference in Perugia.

Kercher's sister, Stephanie, said the verdict "does bring a little bit of

justice, for us and for her." But she added: "Life will never be the same without Mez."

The prosecutors said they were satisfied with the ruling and would not seek to appeal, even though the court did not grant their request for life imprisonment. Prosecutor Manuela Comodi said that the verdict "recognizes the defendants are guilty of all the crimes they had been charged with."

In an interview with ABC News in the hours that followed the verdict, Curt Knox said he was "stunned."

"I just looked at them; I looked at the jurors," he told ABC. He then said he thought to himself: "How could you even do this with what was presented in the court of law?"

Knox's families and her supporters have long sought to cast doubt on the Italian justice system, contending the prosecution's case largely rested on character assassination.

The prosecutors say on the night of the murder, Nov. 1, 2007, Knox and Sollecito met at the apartment where Kercher and Knox lived. They say a fourth person was there, Rudy Hermann Guede, an Ivory Coast



U.S. murder suspect Amanda Knox is accompanied by a penitentiary police officer prior to a final hearing before the verdict, at the court in Perugia, Italy, Friday, Dec. 4, 2009. An Italian jury has begun deliberations in the yearlong trial of American student Knox, who is charged with murdering her British roommate Meredith Kercher in 2007 with her former boyfriend Italian murder suspect Raffaele Sollecito. A verdict is expected later Friday.

(AP Photo/Pier Paolo Cito)
citizen who has been convicted in the murder and sentenced to 30 years in prison. □




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Aruba TODAY

Michael Vick hears boos in return to Atlanta



ATLANTA (AP) - Michael Vick has been welcomed with boos in his return to Atlanta. There were more boos than cheers when Vick made his first appearance on the Eagles' opening drive. He ran for 3 yards after taking the snap and

then heard more boos when he returned to the sideline. He returned to more boos two plays later and ran for 4 yards. Vick later got his first touchdown since his return to the NFL.

He scored on a 5-yard run in

the third quarter. The score gave the Eagles a 20-0 lead.

Vick earned some cheers for his first touchdown since Oct. 15, 2006 with Atlanta.

Before the game Vick was at the front of the pack of Eagles players as the team ran onto



the field, and he was selected to serve as a team captain.

Vick was greeted with a hug from his former Falcons center, Todd McClure, before the coin toss. Atlanta receiver Roddy White also embraced Vick before the game.

There was a large turnout of fans wearing Vick's No. 7 jerseys — both Falcons and Eagles. He received a warm greeting from his former teammates when captains met on the field for the pregame coin toss. □

Jets QB Sanchez has sprained PCL in right knee

FLORHAM PARK, N.J. (AP) - Mark Sanchez's headfirst dive gave the New York Jets a big first down — and a huge scare.

Rest easy, Rex. The Sanchise isn't seriously injured.

Sanchez might be able to play in New York's next game after spraining the posterior cruciate ligament in his right knee during the Jets' 19-13 win over Buffalo on Thursday night. Coach Rex Ryan said an MRI exam Friday revealed the severity of the injury, which could have been much worse.

"I feel good that it sounds like he's going to be healthy," Ryan said. "I think that is the best news we could've hoped for."

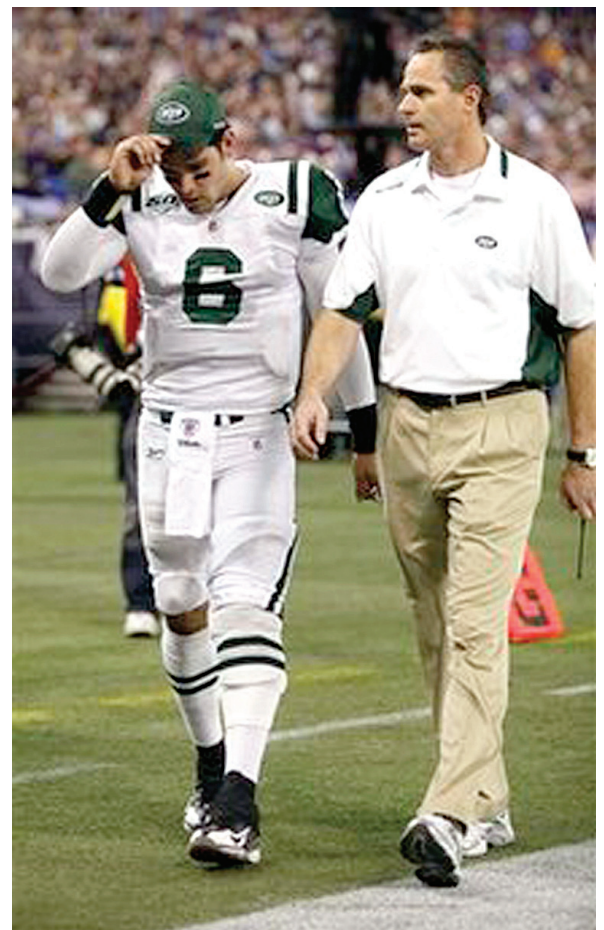
Ryan said Sanchez will initially wear a brace to stabilize the knee, and is optimistic the rookie could be ready to go against the Buccaneers at

Tampa Bay on Dec. 13. Since the Jets played Thursday, they have 10 days before their next game — giving Sanchez extra time to heal. That could be good news for the Jets (6-6), who kept their slim playoff hopes alive with the win over the Bills.

"We'll see how he is during the week," Ryan said, "but it was encouraging news."

Sanchez was injured when he dived headfirst on an 8-yard run early in the third quarter. He was examined by trainers on the sideline and replaced by Kellen Clemens before he made his way with a slight limp to the locker room.

Sanchez was already nursing a sore left knee after he was hurt in a 17-6 win over Carolina last weekend. Concerned about Sanchez's sliding abilities, Ryan had brought in Yankees manager Joe Girardi for a tutorial Tuesday. □



Tiger Woods takes golf into a year of uncertainty



THOUSAND OAKS, Calif. (AP)—Practically every new twist in the shocking tale of Tiger Woods includes an aerial view of his Florida home where his troubles began, when he pulled his SUV out of the driveway and drove it into a tree.

More questions arise when one surveys the expanse of grass across the street—the practice range at Isleworth. Perhaps the most pressing: When will Woods slip into his spikes, step out of his house and hit golf balls again?

There is no telling when the world's No. 1 player will choose to return to the PGA Tour and the massive galleries that, most certainly, will not gaze upon him quite the way they did at his previous 253 tour events.

Woods has been out of the public eye since the car crash and subsequent allegations of extramarital affairs took Tigermania into startling new territory during Thanksgiving weekend. He went 13 years without a hint of scandal, the first \$1 billion athlete with barely a blemish, guarded with the media even in good times. That's not likely to change now.

"I am dealing with my behavior and personal failings behind closed doors

with my family," Woods said while confessing to "transgressions" on his Web site last week. "Those feelings should be shared by us alone."

The greater mystery is his future.

"I think he's held at a different standard than everybody else out there," Kenny Perry said Friday at the Chevron World Challenge. "This will be interesting to see how he handles this, though. This is a totally different knock on him when he gets out there and plays next year."

Until the crash in the wee hours of Nov. 27, anticipation about 2010 in golf was geared toward Woods' pursuit of Jack Nicklaus' record in the majors, especially a year with Pebble Beach (U.S. Open) and St. Andrews (British Open) in the rotation.

That has been replaced by uncertainty and uneasiness. A sport that promoted its wholesome image as its biggest asset now has a tawdry mess on its hands because of its star player, who happens to be among the most famous athletes in the world.

"What's interesting to me about this situation is that while it's bad in the short term, for golf, on a global

basis, it has moved from being a sport to having iconic, celebrity status, and a whole host of other people are now interested," said John Rowady, president of rEvolution, a Chicago-based sports marketing and media agency.

"And it may be a sport that is not prepared for that kind of publicity."

The timing was not the greatest. The PGA Tour is struggling to find title sponsors at four tournaments and renew deals with at least a half dozen others. It also will start negotiations on a network TV deal that ends in 2012.

"I think one of our biggest selling points for the corporate world is that we are relatively controversy-free," Geoff Ogilvy said at the start of the year. "We don't generally have too many golfers getting into trouble like some other athletes in other sports do. We're pretty squeaky-clean like that. It's been like that for a long time. It doesn't really seem like it's going to change."

PGA Tour commissioner Tim Finchem has been silent during all this. He hasn't made himself available for comment except for a statement in

support of Woods' family and the player's request for privacy.

Asked if Finchem would take questions about concerns for golf's image or whether it would affect business, spokesman Ty Votaw said the tour does not comment on "hypothetical situations, conjecture and guesswork."

At the start of the decade, Finchem was at Pebble Beach talking about how golf was in good hands. He cited the new arrivals of Adam Scott, Charles Howell III, David Gossett, young players who represented the values inherent in golf.

No need to mention Woods.

No one ever imagined his name would be splashed across anything but the sports pages, except for being on the cover of Time magazine in 2000 during one of the greatest summers of golf.

Padraig Harrington was quick to distinguish between Woods as a player and a person.

"It's very much a private matter there," Harrington said. "He wasn't ... speeding or had a DUI and hurt somebody. It really is a family matter. Hopefully, that's the worst that golf

could ever do. But how it reflects on golf? I suppose things like this have happened before at times, and we move on.

"I would still say golf—I know this may be saying it from inside the sport—is constantly the No. 1 sport with the moral ethics and things like that. So I think we're in a very strong position going forward."

Woods' corporate sponsors said they are standing by him. Most sports marketing consultants believe the scandal involving his personal life will have little bearing on TV ratings or contract negotiations. No one can be sure, however, just as no one can predict where or when he will return to golf.

"There's no impact on the sport itself other than the fact its best asset is a little damaged right now," said Michael Gordon, CEO of Group Gordon Strategic Communications, a crisis PR firm in New York.

"But it starts with Tiger. He's at the top of the pyramid," Gordon said. "When Tiger is hurt, other assets could get hurt, too—potentially the PGA Tour, sponsors, his family. It's a little bit of a domino affect, and he's the first domino." □





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Blazers' Greg Oden expected to miss rest of season

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—Portland center Greg Oden will likely miss the rest of the season after fracturing his left knee cap Saturday night in the Trail Blazers' victory over the Houston Rockets.

"He's a strong kid," said general manager Kevin Pritchard, visibly shaken by the latest injury to befall the 7-foot center. "He's going to bounce back from this."

Oden dropped to the floor clutching his left knee and grimacing after colliding with a driving Aaron Brooks(notes) midway through the first quarter.

Oden was almost immediately surrounded by trainers and physicians. The crowd at the Rose Garden stood and chanted "Oden! Oden!"

The game was stopped for some 7 minutes. Finally, Oden was gently moved to a stretcher and wheeled from the court. He underwent an MRI shortly thereafter.

The Blazers said Oden will need surgery. A timetable for his return was not immediately set.

"I'm obviously disappointed having worked so hard to get to where I was. This is a setback but I'll be back. It's in God's hands now," Oden said in a statement released by the team. "I want to thank the fans, my teammates and everyone in the Blazers family for all of their good thoughts."

Oden, the No. 1 pick in the 2007 NBA draft out of Ohio State, has been plagued by injuries his entire NBA career.

The 7-footer missed rookie season after undergoing microfracture surgery on his right knee. Last season, Oden sat out six games after injuring his right foot in the season opener against the Lakers, then missed 14 games after the All-Star break with a bone chip in his left knee. He finished the season averaging 8.9 points and 7 rebounds.

Oden lost weight during the offseason and was averaging 11.7 points and 8.8 rebounds this season as a starter.

"I thought he was the most consistent player this short season," coach Nate McMillan said. "For him to go through this—it's just unfortunate for him because he worked so hard."

Blazers guard Brandon Roy(notes) said Oden spoke to the team at halftime, after he had learned of the diagnosis.

"He told us to keep fighting," Roy said. "He feels like he's letting us down."

Portland went on to edge the Rockets 90-89, snapping a three-game losing streak. But Oden's injury felt like a "punch in the gut," Pritchard said.

The Blazers have been beset by injuries. Starting forward Nicolas Batum(notes) needed shoulder surgery just before the opener. Fellow forward Travis Outlaw(notes) fractured his foot in mid-November and required surgery.

Forward Rudy Fernandez(notes) was out of Saturday night's game with sciatic pain and set to undergo an MRI. It was uncertain if he would be with the team on an upcoming four-game trip starting with the Knicks on Monday night.

Even McMillan was set to undergo surgery Monday after rupturing his right Achilles' tendon during practice.

The coach was participating in practice because the team is so short-handed. He will miss the team's upcoming road trip, replaced by assistant coach Dean Demopoulos. □



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Honduras: Lobo iniciará ofensiva diplomática internacional

TEGUCIGALPA (AP) - El presidente electo Porfirio Lobo emprenderá una ofensiva diplomática para integrar de nuevo a Honduras en la comunidad internacional, luego que el país fue sacado de la OEA por el derrocamiento de Manuel Zelaya.

Lobo, que ganó las elecciones generales del 29 de noviembre, visitará el martes al presidente costarricense Oscar Arias, mediador en la crisis política surgida por la destitución de Zelaya el 28 de junio.

“Estaremos en Costa Rica y Panamá, y de allí seguimos a otros lados”, dijo Lobo. “Iré a solicitarles (a las naciones) que se abran y estoy dispuesto a ir donde sea con tal de tener éxito en mi misión”.

“El pueblo acudió masivamente a las urnas en un proceso transparente y tomó su decisión. Ahora las naciones deben reconocer las elecciones que se enmarcaron en la democracia y la libertad”, dijo Lobo en entrevista publicada el domingo en El Heraldo.

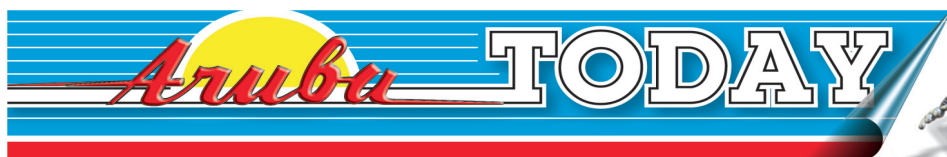
El secretario general de la Organización de los Estados Americanos (OEA), José Miguel Insulza, admitió el viernes en un comunicado que Lobo “está en la mejor posición (que el presidente de facto Roberto Micheletti) para resolver la crisis”, mientras la Unión Europea calificó los comicios como un “paso significativo hacia delante”, tras lamentar las “circunstancias anormales” en las que se desarrollaron.

Estados Unidos, Canadá, Colombia, Panamá y Costa Rica apoyan abiertamente el reconocimiento del nuevo gobierno de Lobo. Lo contrario se observa en Venezuela, Brasil, Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Nicaragua, Paraguay y Uruguay, entre otros.

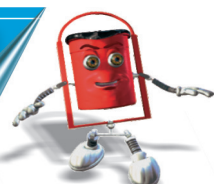
Micheletti ha demostrado una sorprendente resistencia a la presión diplomática internacional desde el golpe de estado, rechazando las demandas casi universales para que Zelaya fuera restituido a su puesto antes de los comicios. □



Fueron lanzados en Honduras sellos con la imagen del presidente de facto Roberto Micheletti en Tegucigalpa, el viernes 4 de diciembre de 2009. (AP Foto/Esteban Felix)



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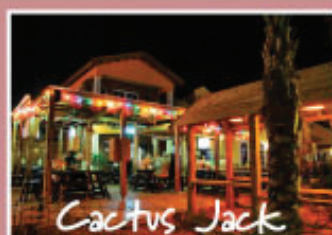


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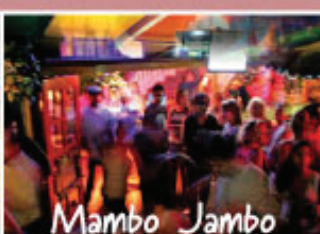
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